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# Conservation of Life

ISSUED UNDER DIRECTION OF  
COMMISSION OF CONSERVATION  
OF CANADA,  
OTTAWA

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## SPECIAL TOWN PLANNING NUMBER

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VOL. I.

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European countries, unfortunately, know only too well the evils that have arisen from want of foresight in town-planning. . . . Considering the terrible lessons that are so forcibly impressed upon one by these experiences in older countries it would be nothing short of a national disaster, if, for the want of proper forethought, a similar state of things was permitted to come into existence in Canada, which is essentially a land of wide spaces, where there should be breathing room, not only for the present population, but for a nation ten times as large. . . . I think, however, it is not out of place to utter one word of warning. If the question is to be dealt with effectively, there must be no delay. The evil must be grappled with at once and drastically. . . . The whole question, too, is one in which prevention is far more effective than cure.—*From address of welcome by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, Toronto Conference, 1914.*

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# Conservation of Life

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## INTRODUCTION

THIS issue of Conservation of Life is devoted to Town Planning and Housing. An endeavour has been made to give a general understanding of the objects of town planning, and to explain the close connection between town planning, housing and public health.

The aim has been to give an introduction to the above subjects and at the same time enable readers to grasp the object and scope of the proposed activities of the Commission of Conservation in regard to them. In a later issue it is hoped to deal with these matters in more detail, especially from the financial point of view as they affect Canadian conditions.

There are several factors which make the present an opportune time to engage in the preparatory work required before we can take adequate steps to comprehensively plan the cities and towns and generally improve housing conditions and public health in Canada. For instance, the need for maintaining a high standard of physique in our population is specially evident at this critical juncture in the affairs of the Empire. There is also the fact that the proper time to do preparatory work in connection with town planning and housing is during a lull in building operations such as we have at present in Canada, and perhaps a more important consideration is the likelihood that this lull will be followed by a period of great activity and rapid growth in our cities after the close of the war. Now is the time to prepare for that growth and to take those preventive measures which are alone effective in securing amenity, convenience and proper sanitation in connection with the development of land.

Planning should not be confined to the cities and their suburbs, but should also take into account the urgent need for good roads in the rural districts. The principal rural highways should be properly planned as well as properly constructed, and their alignment should be determined as part of a skeleton road scheme for each province, in which regard would be paid to the future growth of the towns along or near to each main route. Improved highway communication is becoming more and



more necessary to enable full advantage to be taken of rapid motor transit, to facilitate the distribution of agricultural produce, and to enable the homes of the people to be spread over wider areas.

Moreover, at the present time of financial stringency in connection with municipal affairs, it is desirable to draw attention to the wastefulness of the haphazard methods of developing land now in vogue, and to the economies which proper town planning would secure. Town planning will save money and give an added security to municipalities in regard to finance. What is perhaps more material in the long run is that it will help to conserve life and to raise the standard of physique throughout the Dominion.

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## TOWN PLANNING AND HOUSING REFORM IN CANADA

A GREAT deal has been done in Canada in recent years to improve public health and to draw attention to the need for better housing conditions, but there is need for more enquiry and extended effort on the part of all who are interested in conserving human life and raising the standard of public health.

A comparatively new country, such as Canada is, has peculiar difficulties to contend with, but it has also peculiar opportunities. It can learn much and derive benefit from the study of conditions in older countries, and at comparatively small expenditure of money it can take steps to prevent the creation of evils which when once created can only be remedied at great cost.

### HOUSING REFORM

Most people are acquainted with examples of bad housing and bad sanitary conditions in one form or another. All civilised countries suffer from these conditions, and no measures have been taken to remedy them which can be accepted as suggesting a basis for a council of perfection in regard to what is called housing reform. But in some countries, notably in Great Britain, partial remedies have been found for the evils of bad housing and a high standard of sanitation has been attained. In so far as the attempts to remedy existing bad conditions have been unsuccessful up to the present, it has been largely due to the fact that the bad conditions have been of such a long established character that their removal has to be a matter of gradual change over a long period of time. The change has to take place in the habits and opinions of the people themselves, as well as in the improvement of their housing conditions. In Canada we have allowed some conditions to grow up which are not what they should be, which are, in fact, as bad as they are in older countries, but we have still time to take advantage of the lessons which other countries have to teach us, and it will be well to do so before we



allow the community to accept their present unsatisfactory conditions as inevitable or permit those who suffer from them to become habituated to them.

In any case it will be generally agreed that there is room for enquiry into housing and sanitary conditions, and that there is much that should and could be improved, even if the matter is considered solely from the utilitarian point of view.

But apart from the question of remedying existing evils it is of urgent importance that steps should be taken in this country of rapidly growing urban communities to prevent their recurrence in future.

It can be said with a greater measure of truth with regard to housing than perhaps with regard to any other social question that "prevention is better than cure." What has been done in this latter direction in England points the way to a very real and very substantial success.

#### TOWN PLANNING

Preventive measures in connection with housing evils may all be included under the term "town-planning." As popularly understood in Canada and the United States, town planning does not appear to have much connection with housing, but this is due to an erroneous impression of what town planning is. That may be because the term itself suggests to the mind the mere embellishment of the external features of the town or city, such as the architectural qualities of its buildings or the efficiency of its transportation, and does not convey any idea of the extent to which it enters into the fundamental aspects of city life and growth. Or it may be because the idea of what is meant by the term has been gained from the kind of town planning that has been chiefly prevalent in some countries, such as Germany and the United States, which has concerned itself for the most part with the external and grandiose in city development. But whatever the reason it is an error to assume that town planning concerns itself solely with any one thing connected with improvement of a town either as regards its external appearance, its sanitation or its convenience. In the sense in which it is used in Great Britain and in the sense in which it has lately come to be understood in America it covers everything connected with the city and concerns itself with everything that has to do with the health and well-being of the citizens. In that broad aspect it is really more important than the housing problem, or the sanitary problem, or the transportation problem, since it includes all these and more, and provides the only satisfactory method of studying and dealing with the inter-relation of these problems with one another.

#### WHAT A TOWN PLANNING SCHEME MAY INCLUDE

The comprehensive and constructive character of a town planning scheme in Great Britain will be gathered from the following table of the contents of the Ruislip-Northwood scheme. The scheme deals with an area of 5,900 acres, or over nine square miles, of land lying within the 15-mile radius of the centre of London. It consists of a map or plan and 88 provisions, and, having been approved by Parliament, it can virtually only be altered by its consent.



The map of the scheme fixes the lines and widths of the main arterial roads, the position of all open spaces and parkways, the positions of the residential, shopping and factory areas, and the general layout of the town in all its bearings. It includes provisions with regard to:—

New Streets (width, direction, position and how cost is to be met)

Widening existing streets

Adjustment of street boundaries

Naming of streets

Relaxation of local by-laws

Submission of all plans and subdivisions to local authority

Minor modifications of plan if circumstances change

Diversion and stopping up of existing highways where necessary

Appropriation at agricultural rates of land for garden allotments, cemeteries and public open spaces

Reservation of land for private open spaces, and proper maintenance of same

Donation of land by owners to local authority (90 acres) in exchange for certain privileges granted

Fixing of building lines on all streets to secure adequate air space, protection of trees, and room for further widening of streets if and when necessary

Fixing of proportion of building subdivisions which may be covered by shops (half of area), dwelling houses (third of area) and other buildings

Minimum cubic space per person to rooms, minimum window space in proportion to floor area, and limitation of projections from main buildings

Limitation of the number of buildings to each acre (a maximum of 12 houses on the average and 20 houses on any one acre is prescribed)

Height of buildings (maximum 60 ft. to eaves, and in no case higher than width of street)

Delimitation of areas which may be used for factories, shops and residences

Size of living rooms (minimum 500 cubic feet)

Character of design of buildings

External larders for food; separate closet accommodation for each family; prevention of nuisances in gardens

Prohibition of advertisements which interfere with amenity

Height of fences

Recovery of half of any value which is given to the land by making of the scheme.

These are some of the matters covered by this one scheme, but their importance is only realised by taking into account the powers given under the scheme to prevent unreasonable claims for compensation. In the first place, during the three years while the scheme was being prepared, no owner could erect any building or enter into a contract which would contravene the proposed scheme. For instance, he could not erect a building on any site without consent of the local authority.



Secondly, no claim could be made for damage caused to property by fixing (1) building lines, (2) limiting the number of buildings to each acre, (3) preventing the erection of factories or shops on certain parts of the area, (4) limiting height or prescribing the character of the design of buildings, etc., if the Local Government Board decided that these things were reasonable for *the purpose of amenity*. Thus no overcrowding is permitted, either in regard to the amount of building on an area or in regard to the number of persons per room, and no person can claim compensation because he is thus restricted.

An important point in connection with this and other schemes in England is that it deals with land in the area of more than one local authority. The Ruislip council, which is preparing the scheme, obtained the consent of the Local Government Board to the inclusion of part of the area under the jurisdiction of the Watford council. With this consent it was able to prepare a scheme in respect of an area which included land outside its own district. Under the scheme, however, as prepared the Watford council is made responsible for carrying out the scheme for its own part of the area.

The scheme was carried through with the consent of practically all the owners, and it is claimed that the benefits it confers upon them are in excess of any loss they may suffer, notwithstanding that the public health gains immeasurably. Under such conditions slums become almost an impossibility without any cost to the community. The practical effect of the scheme in regard to the housing question is still to be tested, but it may be claimed even now that most of the evils of existing housing conditions will be prevented by its operation.

#### COST OF A SCHEME

The cost of preparing the scheme and the maps, obtaining the consent of the Local Government Board and Parliament, over a period of three years is given as \$5,000. The chairman of the council has stated that seldom has a local authority obtained so much for so little outlay. Its ultimate cost to the council over the next 30 or 40 years will probably be about \$150,000, but for this it will have obtained advantages of incalculable worth, healthy housing conditions, streets of ample width, 120 acres of public parks, pleasant amenities, security for owners of large residences, preservation of natural features, architectural control, etc. Moreover it will only have paid for these benefits as the increase of the assessable value of the property provides the local authority with additional resources for that purpose. It may be claimed that the council will gain direct monetary value for all its expenditure without counting the indirect social advantages of the scheme. This is because of the fact that it has used preventive measures under the powers given by the British Parliament in regard to matters which are usually neglected until it is too late to remedy them at reasonable cost. We thus see the supreme advantage of a preventive as distinguished from a remedial scheme.



## TOWN PLANNING NOT A REMEDY FOR ALL SOCIAL EVILS

The above may not include all the matters which deal with isolated housing or sociological evils which are known to the reader, but they deal with all such matters as could be foreseen and provided for in the district to which they refer, and they indicate not the limits of a scheme, but its possibilities.

Considered in this broad sense we see the extent to which housing reform is linked up with town planning. Every person who has interested himself in housing conditions knows how difficult it is to suggest any remedy for particular housing evils because of the vicious circle of cause and effect, the connection between the housing question and all matters related to the cost of land and its development.

Of course it would be folly to claim that town planning is a means of solving all problems connected with city life or social conditions. For instance, it can have no direct bearing on the important economic question of the relation between the wages earned by the worker and the contribution he pays for shelter, although indirectly it has a bearing even on that problem, in that it prevents the worker being taxed (and he is frequently heavily taxed), both for the costly remedies which have to be applied by nearly all towns to remove evils which have grown up owing to lack of foresight and wise planning, and for the losses entailed by failure to employ science and discrimination in the designing of streets and buildings. Between 1910 and 1914 rents in Canada increased by 35.9 per cent, an increase which is quite out of proportion of the increased cost of labour. It may be claimed with reason that much of this increase is due to waste in the method of developing land and that it could be avoided by proper town planning. In any case, it is no reason to neglect to take advantage of the direct economic benefits of town planning, as well as those that result in securing a proper standard of comfort and public health, because it does not solve every social problem. In greater or lesser degree it touches every social problem and in view of the rapid urbanisation of the people in the Dominion, and the ease with which town planning can be applied, it should be dealt with as an urgent matter.

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

The present is an appropriate time to proceed with the preliminary work in connection with town planning. This preliminary work can be done by municipalities or specially appointed commissions without waiting for legislation. Some idea of the course which should be pursued may be gathered from the following report, which has been submitted to the Vancouver Civic Centre Committee, with regard to the planning of Greater Vancouver. The suggestions contained in this report are such as are likely to be suitable for application in most populous areas in the Dominion. These suggestions are intended to indicate some of the steps which should be immediately taken by those who are persuaded that town planning is desirable, and who only require some indication of the right course of action to pursue.



## REPORT ON THE PLANNING OF GREATER VANCOUVER\*

To the Vancouver Civic Centre Committee.

Gentlemen:—During my recent visit to Vancouver I was impressed with the beauty of the site on which your city and the adjacent populous centres are growing up, and with the need which exists for the preparation of a comprehensive plan of the whole area comprised in what may be described as Greater Vancouver.

The site is unique both in regard to natural beauty and business prospects. The populous group of districts, which include Vancouver, Point Grey, New Westminster, N. and S. Vancouver and their environs, is suffering in a special degree from haphazard growth and speculation in real estate, notwithstanding the progress that has taken place in the last few years in regard to the control of sanitary matters and local improvements. There is need for co-operation between the administrative authorities and the chief land and railway interests, for the mutual benefit of all concerned, and principally with a view to securing that Greater Vancouver will enjoy the benefits of wise foresight exercised in proper time.

However excellent separate schemes may be for creating civic and university centres, new harbours, railway terminals, industrial areas and means of transportation, they will all lack the chief quality of a proper city plan if they are not considered in relation to one another and in relation to the general business interests and health of the citizens. Important as are the needs of the immediate present they can only be properly and adequately provided for if consideration is given to their relation to the future growth of the whole area likely to be used for building purposes in the next 40 or 50 years. It may be impossible to precisely forecast how any city or group of cities will grow in regard to minor details of development, but it is quite feasible to consider and lay down the main lines along which growth may be directed and so save the taxpayers of the future the heavy expense of remedying evils which are allowed to accumulate as a result of undirected and misdirected growth.

It is insufficient to consider a plan for the city of Vancouver alone, and it is not desirable at the present time to formulate a plan which will involve either Vancouver or any of the adjacent municipalities in any expense which they would not have to incur apart from a plan. But the small cost of having a plan prepared should be faced and there is no time more appropriate for its preparation than the present. In London, which is more critically situated than any other city in the Empire in connection with the war, plans are now being considered for the future development of an area of nearly 1,000 square miles. No less than 137 administrative authorities are concerned in that area, and all of them are joining in conference to formulate a plan for the main arterial roads of Greater London. What is practicable under such conditions and with so many local authorities should be more practicable and more easy of

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\* This report is printed as a supplement to the article on "Town Planning and Housing Reform in Canada," as the suggestions it contains may be suitable for wider application.



accomplishment in Vancouver and neighbourhood. The small cost of making a preliminary survey as the basis for a comprehensive plan will be fully justified by the immediate results and by enabling the authorities to carry out schemes of local improvement on sound and economic lines. It is a suitable time to give employment in such work and to determine the main features of a plan before building activity is resumed.

What seems to be desirable is to form a Commission to consider the whole question of the future development of Vancouver and the neighbouring municipal areas and to suggest, if necessary, new legislation to enable such a plan to be carried out. Such a Commission should be representative of all the authorities having jurisdiction in the area which should be planned, and of the principal railway and real estate interests. Its first duty should be to prepare a topographical map of the area and to make a survey of existing conditions, next to suggest a comprehensive scheme showing the best lines for main arterial roads, desirable railway and harbour improvements, suitable industrial areas, and general provisions for convenience, amenity and proper sanitation. The scheme should not enter into details but merely give the broad outlines.

There are two courses open to us in Canada in connection with the planning of our cities. The first and preferable course is that which has been adopted in Great Britain. It is to secure effective town planning legislation and thereafter to formulate a town planning scheme conforming with the requirements of that legislation. It is essential that the legislation provide machinery for a certain amount of oversight and assistance by a provincial authority, in order to secure practical and effective co-operation between adjacent municipalities, and arbitration on points of difference. It is of the essence of town planning that all municipalities in juxtaposition to one another should cooperate and agree on a harmonious system of development and control, and also that some independent authority should act as arbitrator in those cases where the common good comes into conflict with the interests of property. It follows that in proper town planning it is desirable to have a higher authority than the municipality to act as a sort of Court of Appeal, and that such authority should be a part of the machinery of the Provincial Government. The necessity of such an authority will only be fully realized when town planning is carried out in practice. Cases occur where the linking up of two districts by main roads is found to be as important as the development of roads within each separate municipal area, and when the ratio of expenditure to be incurred by separate authorities has to be determined. In such cases agreement is generally impossible without appeal to an impartial tribunal free of local interests. It is also essential in connection with town planning to have some general principles settled as to the density of building on land, heights of buildings and selection of residential and industrial areas. For one municipality to settle these for its own area is not enough as its whole scheme may break down owing to the want of similar provisions being applied on the borders outside its area. Hence the need for legislation and a provincial department to make certain important matters of general application and to secure co-operation.

The defect of this suggestion may appear to be that it would interfere with local autonomy, but in practice this is not the result. It is



found to be practicable to give a local authority more discretionary power under such circumstances, it links the city management with the provincial management, and it gives added value to the security offered by the city when funds are needed.

However that may be, the initiative in legislation does not rest with the various city authorities, although they might suggest to the Provincial Parliament the need for and the proposed scope of such legislation.

The second course is one which is immediately open to the city and town authorities themselves. It is to voluntarily co-operate with its neighbours in appointing a commission to formulate a scheme. What is meant by a scheme is not merely the presentation of a plan on paper showing the main arterial roads, the desirability of this or that architectural treatment of buildings, and the need for improvement of what might be called the "frills" of the city. These things may be important in their place, but the defect of many schemes is that they only include such matters, and that they usually involve large expenditure of money. This defect frequently arises from the fact that the plan itself and not the scheme for giving it effect is regarded as the essential thing.

In preparing a scheme regard has to be paid to the essential features and functions of the city or group of cities. In the first place, a city is a manufacturing or administrative centre and the first concern of a town plan should be to provide for the proper and efficient carrying on of business. Complementary to the business side of city life is the provision of satisfactory and healthy living conditions for the people. Thus the factory and the home are the two essential and most important considerations in planning the city. Interlaced with these, but always secondary, are the numerous questions relating to transportation, education, recreation and administrative centres. The preparation of the plan or scheme need not involve the municipalities in any expenditure beyond the cost of preparing it. Its chief value to them will be as a guide showing how money can be saved and how, when spending becomes necessary, it can be wisely spent. Much can be secured without cost by agreement and co-operation with owners when both the public authority and the owners have a scheme to follow.

The present condition of each city and town should first be carefully studied and maps and diagrams prepared showing the topography of the area, the traffic conditions and density of population, the location of factory and residential areas, the relation of cost of sites of dwellings and factories to cost of development, and of both items to the assessable values. After that, certain general principles should be determined and a scheme of provisions drawn up to secure effective control of both the built upon and unbuilt upon area. Different provisions will, of course, be necessary for areas already developed and for those not yet built upon. Then, but not till then, should the skeleton plan be prepared illustrating the proposals and as a key to the provisions of the scheme. It is a mistake to draw up a plan and leave the question of a scheme for carrying it out severely alone; it is only when the legal form of a scheme is settled that the practicability of a plan can be realised.

In some other Provinces of the Dominion steps are being taken to promote town planning. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Alberta Town Planning Acts have been passed. In Ontario the City and Suburbs



Act provides that subdivisions of land in cities of over 50,000 inhabitants must be approved by the Railway and Municipal Board and that they must, as far as possible, conform with a general plan of development. In Saskatchewan there are provincial regulations which require that all roads and surveys must be approved by the Board of Highway Commissioners before they can be registered. In Calgary, Edmonton and other cities comprehensive plans have been prepared, and in Winnipeg a Greater Winnipeg Plan Commission has been at work for some time. A Planning Commission is also preparing a scheme for Greater Ottawa. The Winnipeg Commission is working on an area of 200 square miles with the object of preparing a comprehensive plan. The Commission realizes that before it can make its plans effective it will require to have legislation in Manitoba, but the work it is doing is of great value in enabling its members to judge what legislation is required. No legislation is likely to be effective without the help of the municipalities in first preparing maps of existing conditions and making surveys of their areas, and this is work which can be undertaken to advantage without further delay. The value of having a topographical map prepared may be gathered from reports showing the recent experience of Cincinnati and San Francisco. In Cincinnati it was lately reported that no less than 200 miles of sewers were discovered, as a result of a survey, of which the city had no record. The City Engineer of San Francisco has said that \$26,000,000 was the cost of certain improvements which could have been avoided had the planning of the city been adjusted to the topography, and that this was merely a part of the expenditure that would have to be incurred.

I submit these considerations to you with all deference and without knowledge as to whether your Committee is the proper body to approach in the matter. I trust they will be accepted merely by way of suggestion and that you will be good enough to bring them before the proper authorities. I have sent copies to their Worship the Mayors of Vancouver, Point Grey, New Westminster and North and South Vancouver.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS ADAMS,

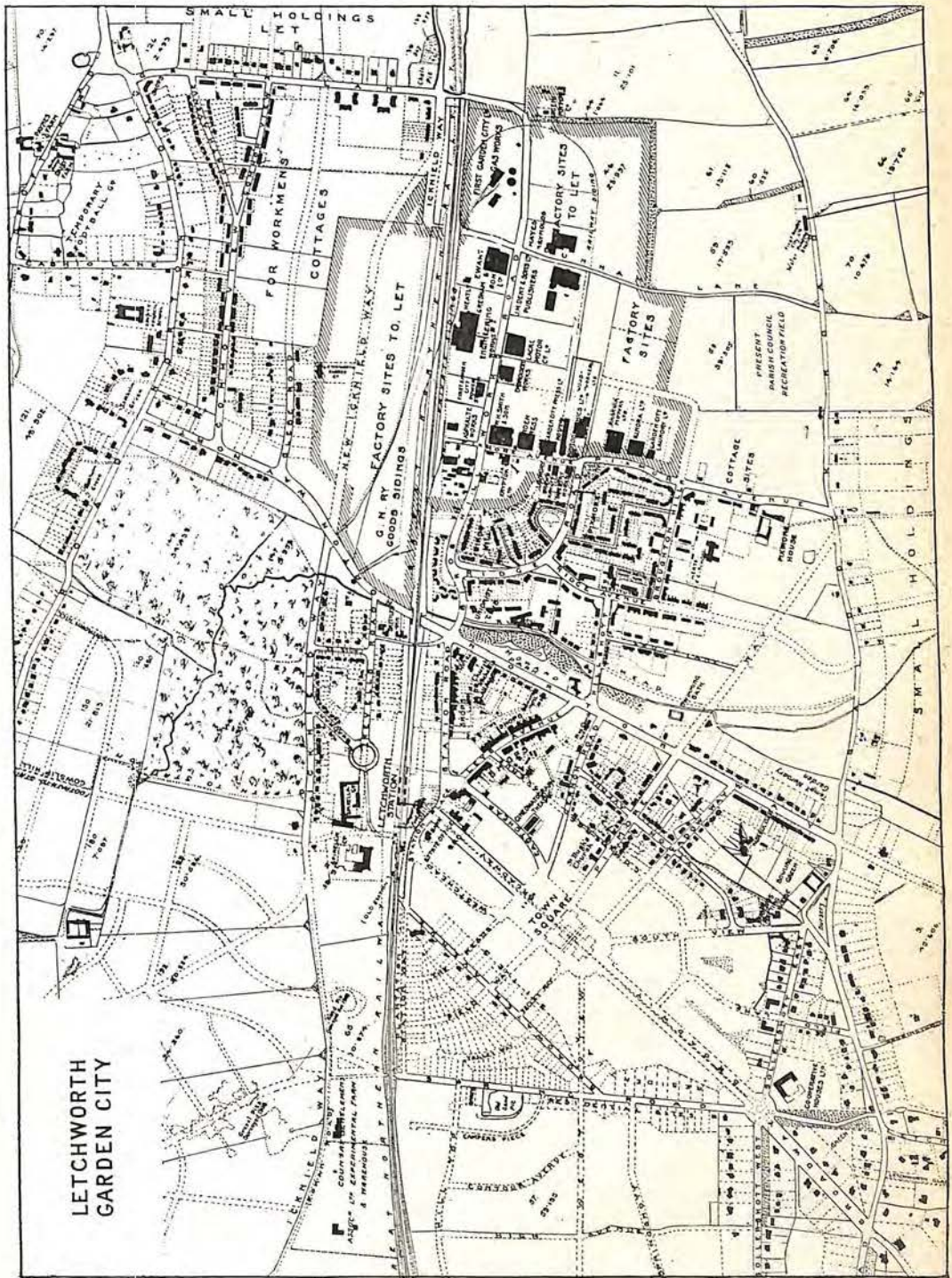
*Town Planning Adviser.*

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## GARDEN CITIES

SOMETIMES town planning is confused with what is known as the garden city movement. The two things are quite different although there is a sense in which they have some resemblance. Town planning in Britain deals with the control of city or town development, including housing and sanitation, by legislative enactment. It is carried out by the municipalities with government assistance, for the proper regulation of new growth in existing cities. On the other hand the garden city is the creation of private enterprise. Among its underlying principles are that the new city has to be planned from the beginning and that proper provision has to be made for adequate air space and good







sanitation, and in these respects it may be regarded as having a close resemblance to town planning. But there are equally important principles in connection with the garden city which do not form a necessary part of town planning schemes. These are:

(1) Acquisition of a rural estate for the purpose of establishing an entirely new and self-contained town.

(2) Reservation of the increased value given to the land so acquired, due to its conversion from agricultural into building land, for the benefit of the community, less such portion of the profits as are necessary to provide a reasonable return upon the money invested.

(3) Removal of factories and work-people from crowded centres to the new town.

(4) Restriction of the area set apart for the town and the permanent retention of the remainder for agricultural purposes.

In connection with the planning of the area the same results are aimed at as in town planning schemes, namely, proper sanitation, convenience in connection with the lay-out of the land, adequate air space and the preservation of amenities.

#### PLAN AND GROWTH OF LETCHWORTH

The plan given in the illustration on page 61 shows the lay-out of the Garden city at Letchworth. This is the only Garden city, although there are several private schemes which come under the categories of garden suburbs and garden villages. The land for the Letchworth scheme was purchased in 1903. It now comprises about 4,500 acres, and is situated 36 miles from London. Over 20 factories have been established, and the population exceeds 8,000. The factory area is limited to the hatched portion on the map which lies on the east side of the town. This secures that the factory smoke will blow away from the residential portion. The land and roads, water, gas, electricity, and sewage works are all owned by a company, which is in effect a body of trustees acting for the community.

In this small town of 8,000 inhabitants the sanitation is as good as in the largest cities in England and the death rate is about 8 per 1,000, as against over 15 per 1,000 in Canada, including rural districts.

In 1903 there were no buildings in the area shown on the map except farm buildings, no railway station, and few roads. In addition to the factories, there are now over 1,600 houses, many miles of new roads, an up-to-date system of sewerage and a pure water supply connected to each house. The land was acquired at \$200 per acre. In 1907 the company had spent about \$1,250,000 in purchasing and developing the estate, and in that year obtained an independent valuation of the property. This valuation showed an appreciation of upward of \$650,000 over the expenditure incurred. The interest payable to the shareholders is limited to five per cent and all further profits will be used for the benefit of the community.

The plan shows that the main arteries have been laid out to accommodate the traffic for all time, one central avenue being from 100 to 150 feet in width, while short residential roads are made narrow so as to keep down the cost of development in connection with the smaller classes of

Continued on page 64.





RUSHBY MEAD, LETCHWORTH

Working class houses adjoining factory areas rented at from \$6 to \$9 per month. The walls are of brick, covered with rough cast, and red tiles are used for all roofs. The low rents are made possible by the cheap form of road construction, which is quite adequate for domestic needs, there being no through traffic on this road. The position of the road is indicated on the plan at "A." The backs of the houses are as pleasant and tidy as the fronts which face a public park. The total cost of the land, inclusive of charges for road, sewer, etc., is about \$2,000 per acre, or \$200 per house.



A FACTORY NEED NOT BE UGLY

It is just as important that men and women should have healthy workshops as healthy homes. Note the pleasant architectural features of this factory and the open surroundings.



dwelling. The healthy conditions in which the workmen live may be gathered from the illustration given of one of the groups of cottages situated on a narrow street. The position of this street is shown on the map at the point marked "A."

#### ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES OF SCHEME

The economic advantages of the scheme are also indicated by the low rents paid, which cover a supply of pure water and proper sanitation. An important feature of the city is the architecture and healthy surroundings of the factory area. From a purely business point of view it is found that an open situation for a factory, where there is adequate light and air, and room for gradual expansion, is of great value to the manufacturer. The concentration of the factories also leads to economy in regard to the cost of distributing power and transporting goods. As the accompanying illustration of one of the factories shows, it is also proved that factories need not be ugly. Gas and electricity are supplied at low rates. Large open spaces have been reserved, together with a permanent belt of land round the town to be used for agriculture only. The town is growing rapidly and has become a paying proposition.

The advantage of planning a town from the point of view of affording protection to the amenities of the site without any loss in building value may be seen from the view of Letchworth lane. In a Canadian town it would be necessary for the community to buy the property abutting on such a lane to enable it to be preserved. By proper planning the lane is reserved as one of the features of the plan and houses are erected on its frontages without destroying its charm. There are equally fine natural features in Canada which are worthy of preservation but which cannot now be preserved except either at excessive cost or in positions where they are inaccessible to the public.

#### COULD A GARDEN CITY BE CREATED IN CANADA?

The question has been asked as to whether such a scheme could be carried out in Canada. No doubt it could. There are innumerable sites suitable and conveniently situated for the purpose. There is a greater disproportion between the value of agricultural land and building land than in England. Factories are on the increase and workmen have not got the same sense of being tied to one district as in England. There is greater need for improved sanitation and a pure water supply at low cost which could be obtained if the proper selection of the site were made. Rents are higher in proportion to the cost of building, and population is increasing rapidly. What has been done in England in this connection should be more easily and more profitably done in Canada. It might only be of value as an object lesson and, therefore, one garden city might suffice, but its value, even as an example of what could be done, would be incalculable. The matter is certainly one which should be considered. An English writer on the subject of garden cities says that it is in the colonies that the immediate lessons of garden city may be taken most readily to heart. "So far," he says, "we have seen in the new countries only a repetition of the many follies committed in nineteenth century Europe, but it is not too late for a more far-sighted and enlightened policy, if not to undo the mistakes already made, at least to prevent their further perpetration."





#### PRESERVING NATURAL FEATURES

In Canada as in England opportunities frequently occur for preserving pleasant natural features. In a town planning scheme, a lane such as the above can be preserved in its natural condition without any loss in the proper use of the land. Imagine this lane cut up by the real estate operator to fit in with rectangular sub-divisions or even widened to double its width in order to comply with the by-laws. Just as fine features are being destroyed in Canada owing to the present stereotyped method of development.



#### WORKING CLASS HOUSES IN CANADA

Both in regard to the natural beauty of the sites and in regard to a cheap and picturesque form of construction there are as good opportunities for creating pleasant and healthy suburbs in Canadian cities as in Europe. But all the value gained from nature is lost by the unsightly back buildings, untidiness of the yards, and the absence of good sanitation. Those things that cost least and that mean most to the health of the people are frequently disregarded.



## THE COMMISSION OF CONSERVATION AND TOWN PLANNING AND HOUSING

THE important bearing of the twin subjects of town planning and housing upon the conservation of life and natural resources in Canada has led the Commission of Conservation to establish a new branch of its work and to appoint a town planning and housing adviser. To properly appreciate the scope and limitations of the new branch of the Commission thus created, it is necessary to bear in mind what are the scope and objects of the Commission itself. It is not an executive body and it has no power to make or administer laws. Its duty is to advise the executive authorities, from the Dominion Parliament downwards, regarding legislative and administrative policies affecting all questions concerned with conservation of the natural resources of the Dominion. Being the creation of Parliament and non-party, as well as influentially representative in character, its advice will always carry great weight. It thus becomes obvious that before making recommendations to the legislative authorities, it should make thorough investigation into facts and theories, and in this connection it is necessary that it should have the help of skilled advisers.

From its inception the Commission has taken a broad view of its functions and of what is meant by the term "natural resources." The chairman of the Commission, in his inaugural address in 1910, said: "The physical strength of the people is the resource from which all others derive value. Extreme and scrupulous regard for the lives and health of the population may be taken as the best-criterion of the degree of real civilization and refinement to which a country has attained."

Having regard to this conception of the scope of the Commission in matters relating to public health, it is evident that one of its principal duties must be to investigate and advise on the subjects of town planning and housing. This has been fully recognized by the Commission, as its work and annual reports bear witness. But it is considered desirable to extend its research operations and to bring together a collection of scientific data, which has not been practicable without a special branch devoted to the subject. Up to the present time town planning and housing have been officially dealt with in the department of the medical adviser of the Commission. These subjects will not now cease to be matters for study and investigation from the medical point of view, but, in their broader aspects, embracing, *inter alia*, the economic, the engineering and the architectural, as well as the medical, they will now be dealt with by a special branch under an expert adviser.

The twin subjects of town planning and housing have to be carefully investigated, as a special Canadian problem, and not as one which may be prejudged as necessarily having any similarity to that which exists in other countries.

The rapid urban growth within the Dominion makes it desirable that consideration should not only be given to the questions of curing evils and altering conditions already established in municipalities, but that the best methods of avoiding the repetition of these evils, and the



creation of worse ones, should be thought out, so that preventive measures can be devised.

The two aspects of the problem, *i.e.*, the remedial and the preventive, will require to be considered together, but different courses of treatment will have to be devised in connection with each.

The legislation of Great Britain on town planning has so far commended itself to the Commission as the best basis for legislation in Canada, and a draft Town Planning Act has been prepared following the British precedent. This draft will require further discussion and amendment before it can be presented to the Provincial Governments as representing the final views of the Commission on the subject of town planning. It will also be necessary, in considering both questions, to consider the proper kind of provincial machinery required for the administration of any new legislation and to make suggestions to the Provincial Parliaments under that head.

A new Housing Act should also be framed as soon as possible as a model for the Provincial Legislatures, but much investigation into housing conditions will be necessary before a satisfactory Act can be framed to deal with the housing problem.

Visits will be paid to all the provinces and many of the cities in the Dominion in connection with these investigations, and opportunity will be taken in connection with these visits to arrange conferences with representatives of Provincial Governments and municipalities to discuss the many points which will have to be considered especially in regard to their local or provincial application. Incidentally the town planning branch of the Commission will be glad to give advice to municipalities with regard to town planning schemes of their own.

Ultimately when new legislation is passed, the Commission, through its officers, will be prepared to advise both as regards amendments of the legislation and as to its practical working in the various municipalities in Canada. As the Commission will be quite free from judicial and administrative duties, it is hoped that the officers of the Commission will, by their thoroughness, judgment, and impartiality, so commend themselves to the administrative authorities as to obtain their confidence in arbitrating on matters of difference caused by the practical working of the new legislation.

It will be an object of the Commission to endeavour to persuade all the provinces to adopt Town Planning and Housing Acts, based on the same general principles, but differing in detail only so far as may be necessary to meet the varied conditions and needs of different provinces. Three of the provinces have passed Town Planning Acts, namely, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Alberta, but for the present, the machinery does not appear to have been provided to make them effective. It will be one of the duties of the Commission to make suggestions as to the proper steps to be taken to put the existing Acts to the fullest and best use, and to make recommendations to the different provinces as to the amendments which it may be necessary to make in their Acts to secure harmonious and uniform legislation throughout the Dominion. It is



felt that the Provincial Departments will welcome the co-operation of the Commission in regard to these matters.

Those responsible for this branch of the Commission's work will be at the disposal of all provincial and municipal authorities as well as owners of land and other interested persons or associations, in the matter of supplying data and giving advice respecting the different aspects of town planning and housing. Collections of literature, maps, photographs and slides will probably be made and placed at the disposal of those able to make use of them, with the object of bringing the utmost light to bear upon the subject.

Although it may be assumed that the Commission has convinced itself of the need for town planning and housing legislation, this must not be taken to mean that it is organising a new branch for the exploitation of preconceived ideas on the subject. As already stated, the first duty of that branch will be to investigate facts and in the performance of that duty it is important that the work should be started with an open mind, that every view should be heard and considered and that no private interest should be disregarded.

It is hoped that bodies and persons interested in either town planning or housing will co-operate with the officers of the Commission in collecting information regarding conditions in the Canadian cities and towns and assist them in arriving at the right conclusions as to the best means of solving the problems which are incidental to urban growth.

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## HOUSING IN GREAT BRITAIN

### NOTES REGARDING THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF ENGLISH MUNICIPALITIES

In considering the question of housing in Canada no doubt regard will be paid to the experience of other countries, and particularly to that of Great Britain. The following notes, for which we are partly indebted to the Municipal Year Book, briefly indicate the procedure under the Housing Acts in England, and will enable those who are interested in the matter to compare this with the procedure in Canada, and to judge how far the latter is inadequate. The Acts also apply to Scotland and in part to Ireland. The principal English Housing Acts are those of 1890, 1900 and 1909. The latter includes a part dealing entirely with town planning, which, for the purposes of these notes, may be ignored.

The matter may be conveniently dealt with under four headings:

- (1) How to get large slum districts condemned,
- (2) How to deal with small slums,
- (3) How to get more workmen's dwellings,
- (4) Progress under the Acts.

#### (1) HOW TO GET LARGE SLUM DISTRICTS CONDEMNED

Provision is made for the clearing of large unhealthy areas in urban districts, and for carrying out improvement schemes for such areas.

It is the duty of the medical officer of health, either when he sees proper cause, or when two or more justices, or twelve or more ratepayers in his district complain of any unhealthy area therein, to inspect such area and report thereon. If he represents an



area as not unhealthy, the ratepayers may appeal to the Local Government Board, which may secure an independent report, on which the local authority must act.

When an area is declared unhealthy, the local authority, that is, the municipality, if possessed of sufficient resources, must make an improvement scheme. If it fails to do so, it can be made by the Local Government Board and forced by mandamus. The local authority may pull down buildings, clear out the area and make or widen any necessary street.

Compensation has to be based upon the fair market value of the property, without any additional allowance for compulsory purchase, due regard being had to the nature and condition of the property. Deductions have also to be made in respect of any enhanced value given to the property by reason of its improper use or owing to overcrowding or bad state of repairs. Compensation has to be settled by an arbitrator.

Provision is also made in the Acts for rehousing persons displaced by the erection of public works, railways, etc.

### (2) HOW TO DEAL WITH SMALL SLUMS

Provision is made for the inspection of every sanitary district from time to time, the object of such inspection being to locate all houses unfit for habitation. Records of inspection have to be kept. Any dwelling house represented by any officer of the local authority as being unfit for habitation may be ordered to be closed. There is an appeal against closure to the Local Government Board, without recourse to a court of law. Unhealthy houses may be demolished, but a closing order has to remain operative over three months. In any contract made by the landlord at rentals varying, in part according to the districts, from \$80 to \$200 per annum, it has to be in an implied condition that such houses are fit for habitation. Obstructive buildings may be removed and buildings reconstructed.

Cellar dwellings are now deemed to be unfit for human habitation, if

(a) the surface of the floor is more than 3 feet below the surface of the nearest street, and

(b) it is not on an average of at least 7 feet in height, or does not comply with regulations prescribed for securing ventilation, lighting, freedom from damp, etc.

### (3) HOW TO GET MORE WORKMEN'S DWELLINGS

Local authorities have wide discretion in the matter of carrying out schemes to build houses for the working classes. They require to give no proof of deficient housing accommodation, but can build at any time they deem advisable, provided, as is the case with all municipal work in England, the Local Government Board will sanction the necessary loans.

*How to get land.*—Land can be purchased compulsorily, either inside or outside a district of the local authority, prices to be at fair market value without any allowance for compulsory purchase, and has to be determined by a single arbitrator appointed by the Local Government Board.

*How the land may be used.*—The land may be leased to companies or builders or to working men, or the Council may itself erect houses or shops, purchase, improve, or reconstruct existing houses or purchase or exchange land for the purpose of encouraging others to do so.

Power is also given to the local authority to sell houses after a period of seven years.

Under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act of 1899 power is also given to local authorities to advance money to residents to purchase their own houses. The amount borrowed must not exceed four-fifths of the market value, with a maximum, in all cases, of \$1,100.

*How money is obtained.*—Provision is made for councils to either borrow from the Government, or issue stock, or borrow on security, at rates subject to (a) the Local



Government Board's consent, (b) period of repayment not exceeding 80 years, (c) money so borrowed not being reckoned as part of the debt of the local authority under the regulations which limit the ordinary borrowing of municipalities. It is provided that interest on loans for long periods shall not be greater than for short periods.

Public Utilities Societies (that is those limiting their dividend on capital to 5 per cent) may also borrow up to the two-thirds value of land and buildings. The rate of interest charged is about  $3\frac{3}{4}$  per cent, and the terms of repayment range from 30 to 50 years more in such cases.

*General.*—Four inhabitant householders may petition the Local Government Board, stating that houses are needed in a district, and if the Board finds, after enquiry, that this is so, and the municipality fails to provide the houses, the Board may require it to do so.

Each county council has to appoint a medical officer of health, whose duties are prescribed by the Local Government Board, and who cannot be removed without the Board's consent.

#### (4) PROGRESS UNDER THE ACTS

Since the passing of the Act in 1909 there has been considerable activity in housing matters in England. Under the section which requires that houses shall be in a satisfactory state of habitation before being let 114,357 notices were served by local authorities up to March 31, 1912. Of these 3,629 were closed by landlords, who did not consider it worth while to put them into repair, and 84,822 were repaired to the satisfaction of the local authority. In the case of 323 houses, the local authority executed the work in default of the landlord, and the balance of 19,434 were undisposed of at the above date.

With regard to the closing and demolition of houses, the following figures show an increasing activity from 1909 to 1913:

	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913
Number of houses in respect of which representations were made.....	6,312	6,429	24,429	47,429	55,827
Number of houses made satisfactory for habitation by owners without use of a closing order.....	3,731	3,056	7,042	13,417	18,080
Number of houses closed or demolished voluntarily.....	1,510	1,389	1,419	1,935	2,157
Number of houses in respect of which closing orders were made.....	587	1,511	4,870	9,761	10,701
Number of houses in respect of which closing orders were determined..	*	274	732	2,108	2,870
Number of houses demolished by owners without orders for demolition.....	*	*	534	1,072	1,556
Number of houses in respect of which orders for demolition were made.	196	170	495	1,423	2,190

\*Figures not available.



The foregoing information with regard to the action of the local authorities under the Housing Acts indicates that these Acts have resulted in a very large number of houses in England, previously unsanitary and in need of repair, being made fit for habitation.

During the two years ending 31st March, 1913, no less than 109,931 houses were put into repair either by the landlord or the local authority.

Local authorities have also borrowed the following sums for the erection of houses under Part III of the Working Houses Act of 1890, since the beginning of 1910:—1910, \$535,660; 1911, \$527,075; 1912, \$2,363,070; 1913 (eleven months) \$2,498,685.

There were also applications for further loans for \$2,330,000 from 68 local authorities. Thus the total amount sanctioned and under consideration for 1913 was \$4,828,655.

Housing Societies had also borrowed \$3,664,005 for housing purposes during the above four years.

To realize the full extent to which the Acts operate in improving housing conditions it is important to remember that all the work which is being done in England under the Housing Acts is in addition to that which is carried out under the Public Health Acts, and, further, that for every house repaired or made sanitary by compulsion several are likely to be repaired or made sanitary voluntarily by the land owners. Legislation of this kind is perhaps more important because of its indirect results than because of its direct results. What is done in Canada in regard to the improvement of housing and sanitation is less than is required to be done under the Public Health Acts in England alone, *i. e.*, apart from anything required to be done under the Housing Acts to which the foregoing figures relate. This fact only requires to be stated to show how necessary it is for the matter to receive urgent consideration in the Dominion.

## TOWN PLANNING

### SUMMARY OF WHAT MUNICIPALITIES CAN DO

#### 1. *Map and Survey*

(a) Prepare map of existing conditions in city or town and environs, showing areas already built upon, and physical features.

(b) Enquire into existing conditions as regards industrial development and location, transportation, housing, distribution of population, defects of by-law administration, local improvements, building lines, width of streets, air space, heights of buildings, etc.

#### 2. *Town Planning Scheme*

(a) Prepare skeleton map showing main arterial roads and suggestions regarding transportation facilities, zone map of industrial and residential areas, building lines on existing and proposed streets, open spaces, sites of civic and educational centres and other general proposals—without consideration of detailed development of sub-divisions.

(b) Prepare scheme of provisions setting out the regulations under which it is proposed to carry out the plan, the principles on which it is proposed to fix building lines, height and character of buildings, widths of streets for different purposes, proportion of areas occupied by buildings, air space in houses, etc.

NOTE.—Before the second step is taken enabling legislation should be secured from the Provincial Parliament on the lines proposed in the Draft Town Planning Act of the Commission of Conservation. The first step should be taken forthwith by all municipalities and the work done will be good investment apart from town planning.



Canadians who are interested in the questions of securing healthy cities, good roads and improved housing in the Dominion are invited to send information to the Town Planning Adviser of the Commission of Conservation at Ottawa regarding conditions in their localities.

In connection with the work of investigation of existing conditions, it may ultimately be considered desirable to promote housing surveys in different towns and cities, and suggestions as to the questions which should be asked and as to the need for such surveys will be welcome.

Particulars of housing schemes such as those being carried out by the Toronto Housing Company are also desired for review on a future occasion.